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MORI DocID: 756986

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RUEHGT/AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE 3823
INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2336
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 7456
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EZ1:
C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 15564
EZ2:
E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: SNAR, NU, CO, HO, PGOV
SUBJECT: NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY ASSISTS
- OVERFLIGHT OF NARCOTICS LADEN AIRCRAFT
REF: TEGUCIGALPA 15481
1. CONFIDENTIAL, ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: THE PILOT OF THE COCAINE-LADEN AIRPLANE FORCED DOWN OVER HONDURAS ON OCTOBER 8 (REFTTEL) HAS TOLD DEA THAT HE OVERFLEW NICARAGUA WITH ASSISTANCE FROM GON AUTHORITIES. HE GAVE NO FURTHER DETAILS. DEA IS HOPING TO INTERVIEW THE CREW AT GREATER LENGTH LATER THIS WEEK TO DEVELOP MORE INFORMATION; THE AGENCY IS KEEPING THE MATTER CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL THEN. THE GON MAY HAVE NO MORE THAN WE DO AT THIS POINT. WE WILL ENCOURAGE THEM TO PUBLICIZE IT WHEN THE COMPLETE ACCOUNT IS KNOWN. (DAO IS REPORTING SEPTTEL BY IR THE FLIGHT PATH OF THE PLANE, AS SHOWN BY HAF RADAR TRACKING.) END SUMMARY.

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3. EMBASSY ARRANGED OCTOBER 12 FOR DEA AGENT CASTILLO TO INTERVIEW THE TWO CREWMEMBERS WHO WERE CAPTURED OCTOBER 8. NO ONE ELSE WAS PRESENT FOR THE DISCUSSION, WHICH WAS HELD IN THE PRISONERS' PENITENTIARY CELL. THE AIRPLANE'S PILOT, FRANCISCO RUBIANO, DID MOST OF THE TALKING. HE TOLD CASTILLO THAT THE PLANE, BELONGING TO A MR. RODRIGUEZ, FLEW FROM CALI TO A CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIP IN LA CAUCA, COLOMBIA TO PICK UP ITS LOAD OF COCAINE. IT THEN DEPARTED FOR ANOTHER CLANDESTINE AIRSTRIP TO THE SOUTH OF LA CEIBA, HONDURAS WHERE THE LOAD WAS TO BE DELIVERED TO A MR. BARBAS. RUBIANO SAID THAT PREARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN MADE WITH NICARAGUAN OFFICIALS HE WOULD NOT IDENTIFY TO ALLOW THE PLANE AN UNMOLESTED OVERFLIGHT ONCE THE CRAFT IDENTIFIED ITSELF WITH A SPECIAL CALLSIGN (WHICH HE WOULD NOT REVEAL). THE PILOT CLAIMED THAT HE DID NOT REFUEL IN NICARAGUA. HE SAYS HE LEFT LA CAUCA WITH 480 GALLONS OF FUEL, AND HAD 300 POUNDS IN HIS LEFT WING WHEN HE LANDED; HIS RIGHT WING WAS PUNCTURED BY HAF INTERCEPTORS' FIRE, EMPTYING THE TANK. RUBIANO DID NOT SAY HOW MUCH IT HELD WHEN IT WAS HIT.

4. AGENT CASTILLO HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE CAN GET MORE INFORMATION FROM THE TWO CREWMEMBERS IF HE CAN INTERVIEW THEM OUTSIDE OF THE PENITENTIARY AND SEPARATELY. THIS REQUIRES A COURT ORDER. ATTORNEY GENERAL ZEPEDA HAS PROMISED TO COOPERATE WITH US. INDEED, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WANTS TO TRANSFER THE PRISONERS TO A MILITARY BASE SINCE THE PENITENTIARY AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN BOUGHT OFF BY DRUG KING MATTA BALLESTEROS -- A RESIDENT OF THE JAIL. WE HOPE THE INTERVIEW WILL TAKE PLACE BY MIDWEEK.

5. AGENT CASTILLO WISHES TO KEEP HIS INFORMATION ON THE NICARAGUAN CONNECTION CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL HE CAN ROUND IT OUT. OUR IMPRESSION FROM GOH CONTACTS IS THAT THEY HAVE NO MORE INFORMATION THAN WE DO ON THE MATTER. AS NOTED REFTEL, WE WILL ENCOURAGE THEM TO FULLY DEVELOP THIS ANGLE OF THE INVESTIGATION.

(DRAFTED: CON: JCSTRUBLE) PASTORINO

END OF MESSAGE

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